

LEE COUNTY

Honorable Richard Lane

Lee County Courthouse
2311 Gateway Dr.
Opelika, AL 36801
(334) 749-7141

Jerry Bradford
Kathryn Molnar
William Matthews
Peggy Bridges
Ruth Hairston
Belinda Paul
Kim Bentley
Kim McManus
Angie Dollar
Dena Barnes
Clifford E. Jones
Grady Jones
Felicia Williams
Wanda Lewis

Wendy Dean
Lola White
Chris Nunn
Ginger Brannon
Betty Wingo
Margaret Keiley
Emily Kayn
James Higgins
Roberta Jackel
Wendi Huguley
Bill English
Tasha Heard
Virginia Thompson
Melvin Harrison

Lori Klinger
Carolyn Tucker Simmons
Erin Predmore
Keva Scott
Julius Shanks
Thomas Sherfield
Dawn Smith
Lisa Stephens
Liz Todd
Melissa Weldon
Betty Benton
Elizabeth Griffin
Wanda Lewis
J. Read Haughery



Council Priorities

1. Family Resource Center

Lee County needs a Family Resource Center to not only supply a link connecting the many services found in Lee County, but more importantly, to connect those services with Lee County children and families in need of those services.

2. Substance abuse

Lee County needs to address the problem of substance abuse. Through education, prevention and treatment.

3. Quality early care and education throughout the community with an emphasis on literacy.

Quality early care and education throughout the community with an emphasis on literacy.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Quality early care and education throughout the community with an emphasis on literacy

Action Steps

- 1) Identify resources for the 0 to 5 age group that will promote quality early learning experiences.
- 2) Compile and disseminate resource information to providers and families.
- 3) Coordinate efforts to address unmet needs through a functioning Kid stuff committee.

Accessibility of quality child care and early learning options

Action Steps

- 1) Promote family community awareness and the importance of quality child care and literacy.
- 2) Support quality enhancement efforts that result in a more stable, better trained and effective child care workforce.
- 3) Identify barriers to family accessibility of early learning opportunities.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Lee County needs a Family Resource Center to not only supply a link connecting the many services found in Lee County, but more importantly, to connect those services with Lee County children and families in need of those services

Action Steps

- 1) Secure a grant to support FRC Director, who would also serve as Lee County CPC Director, along with officer personnel and equipment, and who could provide a daily source of assistance and a clearinghouse of information which would see that agencies providing services were readily available to the public.
- 2) Write grants and assist local agencies in identifying and applying for grants, as well as coordinate fund-raising activities and other revenue producing methods aimed at supporting the Lee County FRC, so it could provide a variety of services including maintaining a Lee County website database of services and, in addition, produce, publish and distribute a resource Directory of Services for children and families in Lee County.
- 3) Act as the local authority on services for children and families in Lee County and, as such, develop an evaluation of Lee County agencies, or a "report card" of agencies and the services they provide to show accountability to the citizens and taxpayers of Lee County.

Financially stable home

Action Steps

- 1) Assess the level of knowledge of students in schools in Lee County in the area of money management.
- 2) Provide a report on our findings from said assessment to all school systems in Lee County and to the Children's Policy Council.
- 3) Provide information on educational opportunities available outside the school setting and encourage introduction, or the enhancement of fiscal responsibility training in the schools.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Address the county's high levels of illiteracy, truancy, and dropouts with an emphasis on character building traits such as responsibility, self-discipline, and improving good study and work habits

Action Steps

- 1) Develop a collaborative way to promote available area literacy activities and to prevent further dropout.
- 2) Establish a Task Force to coordinate an integrated character-building program that widely promotes character building activities such as through church youth directors, public service announcements and youth organizations besides schools.
- 3) To assess resources/barriers and advantages, a committee or paid evaluator should examine these points and report to the Children's Policy Council with data and suggestions for the next step.

Improve access to education for English language learners and expand school to career to program opportunities

Action Steps

- 1) Assess what is being offered to students in the public schools.
- 2) Assess what is being offered to families in the community.
- 3) Find resources to fill gaps and ways to make the resources more accessible.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Substance abuse and abuse education and prevention and treatment

Action Steps

- 1) Identify possible resources.
- 2) Link Health Department & ACCADA.
- 3) Change legislation making purchase of tobacco products NOT "similar to uniform non-traffic offense."

Child abuse and neglect

Action Steps

- 1) Work with DHR to provide training to required reporters.
- 2) Send reminders to individual agencies.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Create a Family Services & Resource Center for the purpose of coordinating parent services

Action Steps

- 1) Survey agencies in the region to determine services being provided to parents.
- 2) Continue focus group included.

Increase parent awareness of the parental partnerships with childcare providers and school personnel, healthcare personnel, local government, etc.

Action Steps

- 1) Clearly define the partnership by creating and producing brochures for parents of children ages 0 to 5.
- 2) Produce and distribute quarterly newsletter and resource brochures for parents of children 0 to 19 outlining the role of parents, teachers, and other partners in the partnership required to maximize each child's learning and growth experience.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Teens need a safe place to gather which offers activities that meet the needs and interests of teenagers

Action Steps

- 1) Assess what is available in area for teenagers.
- 2) Assess community as to needs and compare to availability to identify gaps.
- 3) Assess community commitment, and begin community dialog.

Public transportation is needed for youth, teens and working parents (to reduce family stress, and increase family self-esteem)

Action Steps

- 1) Assess what is available in the community.
- 2) Assess community as to needs and compare to availability to identify gaps.
- 3) Assess costs and funding available.

There is a need for easy-to-use centralized source of information pertinent to children in the Lee County area such as a resource website as well as a printed resource that could be placed in centralized locations for distribution

Action Steps

- 1) Identify and assess the existing resources available to access information about children. Identify a means, such as a website or printed resource that can be easily accessed by anyone in need of resource information about children.
- 2) Identify funding source for the website and printed resource.
- 3) Identify an individual to build the website and prepare a printed resource. Identify those resources and agencies that provide services to meet the above described needs of children in Lee County.
- 4) Resources listed on the website/and or directory will be reviewed and updated in June of each year.

Policy Recommendations

- Department of Education needs to do a better job of defining truancy, especially as it relates to unexcused absences and tardies.
- Department of Education and AOC need to make concerted effort to work together to make parents more accountable for their children not only in terms of school attendance, but also in controlling behavior of their children.
- More oversight is needed within DHR for how reports of suspected child abuse/neglect are handled, if every accepted/listed as report. County level staff are often very difficult for mandated reporters to deal with.
- Fund Family Resource Centers.
- State legislature needs to try to get legislature to put more funding into the Child Management Agencies.
- State Department of Education - Economic Life Skills Course taught in schools.
- Provide more funding for child care slots.
- Increase funding support for after school programs for children and teens.